

I am not in favor of this change. After 50 years of amateur radio operation, I, the FCC, our government, and most citizens know that learning Morse code at 5 wpm is not impossible for the vast majority of applicants. The recent relaxation of the code speed has put the code test in reach of everyone IF they are willing to exert a small amount of effort to learn it.

The whole point of testing today for basic electronics technical knowledge, FCC rules and regulations, and code is to ensure a sound, mature, technical orientated, rule following American amateur radio society. Amateur radio should not be for everyone. The Citizens band and Family Radio Service is for everyone. Amateur radio service is a telecommunications service heard around the world. It is a part of the American society with a direct world voice. We must do everything within our power and laws to protect that image and ensure the American operators on the amateur radio bands contain only those individuals willing to expend the small effort to learn a few essentials and be proud of their efforts. Take a look at any FREE government handout and you will see that it is disaster. People given FREE space will destroy it, demean it, and have no respect for it. We must earn our privilege for our American FCC amateur radio license.

The code test sets the amateur radio service operator apart from FREE services and is integral to who we were, who we are, and who we should be in the future. The arguments for removing Morse code elements is akin to those who would remove basic math from our schools with the argument that hand calculators eliminate the need for math training. Those that say they have no documentation for the use of Morse code only have to look at any propagation chart and they will see how efficient CW is over voice transmissions in particular.

Instead of arguing over what we should eliminate from the amateur radio testing to make it easier to pass the requirements test we should be discussing what should be added. Computer programming skills, keyboard proficiency, and digital signal processing design are just a few possible examples.

What the amateur radio service needs today is to maintain or even increase the current level of operator competency and not degrade it in favor of more numbers of operators who have no regard for the rules, modes, or technical skills an amateur radio operator should possess. With the availability of the complete written test pools it is relatively easy for almost anyone to pass the written tests today and not really know anything about basic electronics.

We need to keep the Morse code testing requirements for these and many more important reasons.

Respectfully,  
Larry E. Dodd, K4LED (Extra)